

**TESTIMONY FOR CONGRESSIONAL SUBCOMMITTEE  
ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE, DRUG POLICY AND HUMAN RESOURCES**

**SHERIFF DAVE VORE  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
DAYTON, OHIO**

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I would like to begin by offering my sincerest gratitude to the Congress of the United States Committee on Government Reform for holding this most important investigative hearing at Wilmington College. Before becoming Montgomery County Sheriff in 2000, I served as the commander for the Combined Agencies for Narcotics Enforcement Drug Task Force. This was a multi-jurisdictional task force that target upper level narcotics traffickers. During my time as Commander in the mid 1990's we rarely encountered the illegal drug methamphetamine. This problem was relegated to Missouri, Kansas and other states west of the Mississippi river. Not anymore, Meth is marching, no running eastward, and enveloping the whole nation. Very few issues repeat the criminal cycle and resulting societal damage as this illegal drug activity does.

While we in law enforcement and society are familiar with Marijuana, Cocaine, Oxycotin, we are not as familiar with Methamphetamine. This highly addictive stimulant which is relatively cheap to manufacture ensnares the grip of addiction like a vice. According to recent federal estimates more than 12 million Americans have tried methamphetamine. Law Enforcement officers across the nation have ranked meth as public enemy No. 1.

This drug has affected the whole Criminal Justice system in a way unseen since the Crack Cocaine epidemic of the 1980's. Not even during the crack epidemic of the 1980's were normal law abiding citizens effected as they are today as a result of the assault of meth. Giant retailers such as Wal-Mart, Rite-Aid and others have removed non-prescription cold pills from unsecured product shelves. These products contain the active ingredient pseudo ephedrine. Meth manufacturers or cooks extract the "pseudo" and then combine it with other chemicals like iodine and anhydrous ammonia.

During the spring of 2004 the Miami County Sheriff's Office had seen a noticeable increase in the theft of the chemical anhydrous ammonia. This chemical is legally used as a fertilizer. Miami County is primarily a rural agriculture area. In the spring of 2004 my Office assisted the Miami County Sheriff's Office with an Officer involved shooting incident. On one late evening a Deputy was investigating a suspicious individual around an anhydrous ammonia tank left near a farm field. The suspect had just opened a valve on the tanker attempting to siphon off anhydrous ammonia when something went wrong sending a cloud of ammonia into the night air. Two Deputy Sheriff's confronted the individual ordering him to the ground. Instead of following the Deputies order to get on the ground the suspect reached into his waistband and pulled out a handgun. The suspect aimed his weapon the Sheriff Deputies. In defense of their lives, they fired their weapons, fatally wounding the suspect. Further investigation revealed the deceased was heavily involved in the use and manufacture of methamphetamine. This was a tragic result of his horrible addiction.

According the latest DEA Drug Task Force, in 2004 there were approximately 20 methamphetamine labs shut down in Montgomery County as a result of law enforcement efforts. In 2005 thus far, law enforcement has busted or cleaned up at least 30 methamphetamine operations. One main problem for law enforcement trying to combat the manufacture of methamphetamine is the ability for it's manufacturers to cook the product in any location. Although rural areas are preferred venues because of the pungent smell the cooking process emits, cookers have increasingly utilized vehicles as a point of manufacture. This creates a logistical nightmare for law enforcement officers when vehicles are discovered either to be engaging or previously engaged in the manufacture of meth. Toxic waste left by the manufacture of this drug is immense. For every one pound of meth, five pounds of toxic waste is left behind. In Montgomery County during the last 6 months my narcotics enforcement unit has encountered three methamphetamine labs operating out of vehicles. The City of Riverside just last month busted a meth lab operating in a garage which required the response of Ohio Attorney General Jim Petro's Bureau of Criminal Investigation Clandestine Drug Lab Unit. This unit conducted the clean up operation in this particular case. Because materials used to manufacture meth are extremely dangerous, a response of trained personnel capable of handling self-contained breathing apparatuses, air tanks, portable decontamination units, air-purifying respirators and other protective gear are necessary and need to be standard operating equipment of all law enforcement personnel across the state of Ohio and the whole United States.

If methamphetamine abuse reaches the levels seen by crack in the 1980's our already overcrowded jail population will explode. Montgomery and surrounding counties have recently built new jails or added new cells to handle the increased inmate populations resulting from increased drug offenders and Ohio's Senate Bill 2. That is why we must stop meth in its tracks. Therefore I ask the Federal government to assist us in our effort on the front line in this war against meth and its subsequent assault on our society by;

1. Provide funding for Law Enforcement agencies to purchase specialized equipment such as, self-contained breathing apparatuses, portable decontamination units, air-purifying respirators to enable us to clean up labs when discovered.
2. Provide treatment for methamphetamine abusers and support for their children.
3. Keep funds available for HIDTA areas to combat the illegal drug traffickers.

Again, I would like to thank all members of this committee for allowing me to address these concerns in our effort to combat the increasing tide of methamphetamine use in our community.